

This article was originally published in the KCN in their October 1990 newsletter as:

THE BERLIN-LUBECKER K98k

By Robert Jensen and edited by Peter Kuck June 11th 2002

Code "S/237" was assigned to Berlin-Lubecker Maschinenfabrick un Werke in mid 1935 but their first rifles did not appear until 1936. The factories, which made these K98k rifles, appear, to have been located in the Berlin since the "S/237" the rifles produced from 1936 into 1938 share the use of Waffenamt "26" with Mauser Borsigwalde ("S/243"). The manufacturing codes assigned to Berlin-Lubecker from 1935 to 1945 were "S/237", "237", "duv", and finally "qve" on the K.43's made in 1945.

Over a seven-year period the total number of K98k's produced by Berlin-Lubecker was approx. 900,000 rifles. In 1942 and 1943 they switched over to the Production of the G.41 and later in 1944 to the production of G.43 and K.43 semi-automatic rifles. After they stopped producing entire K98k rifles, they continued to make Floorplates, triggerguards, barrel bands, and bolt parts. These were used as spare parts by army ordnance personnel and were supplied as sub-contract parts to other manufacturers. (Examples include stamped triggerguards with a waffenam "214" commonly found on 1943 "dot" produced rifles).

The 1936 "S/237" production K98k rifle used solid walnut stocks and handguards. The stocks were externally numbered and proofed with a branch of service mark. Both Weimar and Nazi style eagles were used and Waffenamt "26" was on all parts. The siderail is marked "Mod.98" (which continued until production ended in 1942). All metal parts were milled, proofed, and numbered to the receiver. The short cleaning rod and flat buttplate were also proofed and numbered. The known serial number range for 1936 is from 7560 to 1463a. The estimated production run, based on the known serial number sample, was 15,000 rifles. All known examples went to the German Army.



The 1937 "S/237" production K98k rifle continued the 1936 rifle standard. Solid Walnut stocks and handguards were externally numbered and proofed with branch of service marks. The 10-inch cleaning rod, flat buttplate, and all milled parts were roofed and numbered. Weimar type wing eagles were used as the firing proofs on the barrel, receiver, and bolt. Nazi style eagles were used only as part of the Waffenamt "26" proofs. The known serial number range is from 3683 to 5089b with an estimated production run of 30,000 rifles. All known examples went to the Army.

Three major changes were made in 1938. The first was a change of the receiver code from "S/237" to "237". The second change (which occurred in late production rifles) was the appearance of Waffenamt "214". The third was the appearance of laminate stocks and handguards. The "S/237" coded rifle saw the continuation of both Weimar type and Nazi style eagles. Waffenamt "26" was used on all parts. Stocks and handguards remained solid walnut, and were numbered and proofed externally as well as numbered internally. The branch of service "H" for the Heer was stamped on the buttstock. All metal parts (including the flat buttplates and short cleaning rods) were milled and numbered. The serial number range is from 5474 to 6875d, with an estimated production run of 50,000 rifles. While the 1938 code "237" rifles saw the elimination of the Weimar type eagles and the use of Nazi style proofing. Waffenamt "26" continued to be used with some waffenamt "214" parts appearing in the "h" range. All metal parts (including the flat buttplates and short cleaning rods) were milled and numbered. Stocks and handguards were laminated. All known production went to the Heer. The known serial number range is from 8037c to 4700h with an estimated production run of 55,000 rifles.



In 1939 "237" coded rifles were also produced for the Luftwaffe. Contract barrels can be found on some rifles. Waffenamt "214" appears on all parts. Stocks and handguards are laminate numbered and proofed externally, with branch of service marks and flat buttplates. All metal parts are milled, proofed, and numbered. Nazi style eagles are used for all proofing except for those rifles produced for the Luftwaffe. The Luftwaffe rifles use the distinctive Luftamt proofs. The known serial number range is from 5671 to 67911, with an estimated production run of 130,000 rifles. Late production rifles have the 12-1/2 inch cleaning rods.



In 1940 the receiver code changed from "237" to "duv". The "237" 1940 dated K98k rifle had laminate handguards and stocks which were still externally numbered and proofed on the bottom rear spine and retained the flat buttplate. Waffenamts "214" is used on all parts. All metal parts were milled, proofed, and numbered. A 12-1/2 inch cleaning rod was standard. Rifles were produced for both the Heer and Luftwaffe and can thus be found with Eagle "H" and Eagle "L" branch of service marks. The known serial number range is from 2723 to 6553t for an estimated production run of 200,000 rifles. The duv coded 1940 dated rifle saw the introduction of the front sight hood in the "k" serial number range. They were otherwise identical to the 1940 "237" coded rifles. Serial numbers were started from the number 1 on the "duv" rifles when the code was changed. The known serial number range is from 135 to 44311, with an estimated production of 130,000 rifles. Bob Jensen has seen only two "duv" 1940 K98k's through the years so to him it's an extremely rare rifle and should not be if, in fact, 130,000 rifles were made.

The 1941 production from "duv" followed the 1940 standard with the exception of the date, which was changed from a four-digit date to a two-digit date. Handguards and stocks were laminate and proofed externally with branch of service stamps, buttplates were flat until the "m" range when cupped buttplates begin to appear. All parts were waffenamt "214" proofed (Berlin-Lubecker used very few subcontract parts throughout its production history with only barrels, cupped buttplates, and some barrel bands having been noted). All the 1941 production rifles appear to have sent to the Army. The known serial number range is from 906 to 9396r, with an estimated production run of 190,000 rifles.

1942 was the final year of K98k production at the Berlin-Lubecker facilities. Several sources state that a total of 30 rifles coded "duv" and dated 1943 were made. There are at least three distinct variations of the "duv" K98k which can be found in 1942. The first followed 1941 standards with the exception of the replacement of the three "214" Waffenamts stamped on the right side of the receiver ring with a single Waffenamts "214" stamped on the top of the receiver above the receiver code. Laminate stocks and handguards externally proofed and numbered with Waffenamts "214". Buttplates were cupped and are often subcontract parts. Subcontracted barrels also frequently appear. The known serial number range is from 4333 to 4149r, with an estimated production run of 190,000 rifles. (this figure seems excessive given the number of "duv" 1942 rifles observed over the years).



The second variation is the "duv" K98k that was assembled by Gustloff on a receiver supplied by Berlin-Lubecker. While the receiver is coded "duv" this is really a "bcd" rifle and the serial number is within the "bcd" serial number range, rather than the "duv" range. This variation can be identified by the familiar Gustloff small number "1", Waffenamts "18", and the lower case letters "a", "e", and "d" used as proofs on various parts of the rifle. The most important identifier is the Waffenamts "749" final assembly proof on top of the receiver ring above the maker's code, which in this case is "duv".

The third variation is the 42 "duv" K98k equipped with the ZF-41 rear sight base. The German Army authorized the ZF-41 installation on July 11th, 1941 and "duv" was one of the earliest makers of the ZF-41 equipped rifles. They made few and are rarely encountered today. These early ZF-41 sight bases produced by Berlin-Lubecker were the "flat-sided" bases that did not have the groove found on the later production bases of other manufacturers. Peter Senich states that "the 'flat-side' base required considerable effort to mount and remove the scope assembly in subzero weather, and it is believed that German experience in the bitter Russian winters dictated the change in design". Berlin-Lubecker was the sole manufacturer of the ZF-41 scope mount. All ZF-41 mounts known at this time have the "duv" maker's code and have the waffenamt "214" Waffenamts.

"S/237", "237", and "duv" coded rifles are seldom found today, perhaps because their travels took them Eastward where they perished in the Russian snow.

1942 duv by Gustloff

In 1942 Gustloff works assembled K98k rifles based on receivers manufactured by the Berlin-Lubecker works. These rifles are marked duv for Berlin-Lubecker but are proofed and numbered as Gustloff K98ks.

Proofing & serial numbers (sample rifle 1942 duv)

Receiver code **duv (42)** receiver proofs waf 749(1 on top)

Side rail **Mod.98**

Serial number 4 digits possible alpha suffix

Upper band s/n **1** **Speed milled**

Lower band s/n **1**

Trigger guard s/n **d** milled with lock screws

Bolt ribbed & blued

Root rear firing proof top s/n underside **1**

Gas shield s/n ghn

Safety s/n **e**

Cocking piece s/n **e**

Extractor s/n

Extractor collar no s/n or waf

Front sight hood no waf

Rear sight meter scale one side s/n **i**

Rear sight base s/n **i on spring**

Stock Laminate

Stock Markings (external reported only)

Side no s/n or waf

Pistol grip no s/n or waf

Spine no s/n or waf **C**

Bayonet lug no s/n **1**

Magazine follower no s/n **1**

1942 duv by Gustloff

In 1942 Gustloff works assembled K98k rifles based on receivers manufactured by the Berlin-Lubecker works. These rifles are marked duv for Berlin-Lubecker but are proofed and numbered as Gustloff K98ks.

Proofing & serial numbers (sample rifle 1942 duv)

Receiver code **duv (42)** receiver proofs 1 on side

Side rail **Mod.98**

Serial number 4 digits possible alpha suffix (K Locke example 2030r)

Upper band s/n **1** **Speed milled**

Lower band s/n **1**

Trigger guard s/n **d** milled with lock screws

Floor Plate blued s/n **1**

Magazine follower blued no s/n **1**

Bolt ribbed & blued

Root rear firing proof top s/n underside **1**

Gas shield s/n **ghn**

Safety s/n **e**

Cocking piece s/n **e**

Extractor s/n **1**

Extractor collar no s/n or waf

Front sight hood no waf

Rear sight meter scale one side s/n **i**

Rear sight base s/n **i on spring**

Stock Laminate

Stock Markings (external reported only)

Side no s/n or waf

Pistol grip no s/n or waf

Spine no s/n or waf **C**

Bayonet lug no s/n **e**

Barrel code Circled **W St. WaA623 ... WaA1**